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Ref. No.: 659-920

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims 42 and 44, and add new claims 45-48 so that the claims read as follows:

Claims 1-10 (Cancelled).

11. (Original) An absorbent garment comprising:

a body panel having a line of weakness extending across at least a portion thereof, wherein said body panel has a tear strength of less than about 5 lbf along said line of weakness.

12. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said tear strength of said body panel along said line of weakness is less than about 4 lbf.

13. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said tear strength of said body panel along said line of weakness is less than about 3 lbf.

14. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said body panel has a tensile strength of less than about 6.62 lbf across said line of weakness.

15. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said line of weakness extends across an entire length of said body panel.

16. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 further comprising a fastener member bridging said line of weakness, wherein said fastener

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member is fixedly secured to said body panel on one side of said line of weakness and is releasably engaged with said body panel on the other side of said line of weakness.

17. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said line of weakness comprises a perforation.

18. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said body panel comprises a nonwoven spunbond material.

19. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said body panel comprises an elastomeric material.

20. (Previously Presented) The absorbent garment of claim 11 wherein said body panel comprises a front body panel joined to a rear body panel at a seam, wherein said line of weakness is formed in said front body panel.

Claims 21-30 (Cancelled).

31. (Original) A method of using an absorbent garment comprising:  
providing an absorbent garment comprising a body panel having a line of weakness extending across at least a portion thereof; and  
applying a tear force to said body panel along said line of weakness, wherein said tear force is less than about 5 lbf, and thereby breaking said body panel along said line of weakness.

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32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said applying said tear force comprises applying said tear force after said absorbent garment is fitted on a user.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said applying said tear force comprises applying said tear force before said absorbent garment is fitted on a user.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said line of weakness extends across an entire length of said body panel.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 further comprising a fastener member bridging said line of weakness, wherein said fastener member is fixedly secured to said body panel on one side of said line of weakness and is releasably engaged with said body panel on the other side of said line of weakness, and further comprising disengaging said fastener member from said body panel on said other side of said line of weakness prior to said applying said tear force to said body panel across said line of weakness and prior to said breaking said body panel at said line of weakness.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said line of weakness comprises a perforation.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said body panel comprises a front body panel joined to a rear body panel at a seam, wherein said line of weakness is formed in said front body panel.

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38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said tear force applied to said body panel along said line of weakness is less than about 4 lbf.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said tear force applied to said body panel along said line of weakness is less than about 3 lbf.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 further comprising applying a tensile force to said body panel across said line of weakness simultaneously with said applying said tear force, wherein said tensile force is less than about 6.62 lbf.

Claim 41 (Cancelled).

42. (Currently Amended) An absorbent garment comprising:

a body panel having a line of weakness extending across at least a portion thereof in a longitudinal direction, wherein said body panel has a tear strength of less than about 5 lbf along said line of weakness, wherein said body panel comprises a front body panel extending continuously between and defining opposite, laterally spaced side edges joined to opposite, laterally spaced side edges of a rear body panel at a pair of side seams ~~seam~~, wherein said line of weakness is formed in said front body panel between said side edges of said front body panel, and wherein said front body panel has a first terminal crotch edge formed at least at a midpoint between said side edges of said front body panel and said rear body panel has a second terminal crotch edge formed at least at a midpoint between said side edges of said rear body panel, wherein said first and second terminal crotch edges are longitudinally spaced apart and define a longitudinally extending gap therebetween at said midpoints between said side edges of said front and rear body panels, and further comprising an

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absorbent composite bridging said longitudinally extending gap at said midpoints between said side edges of said front and rear body panels and overlying said midpoints between said side edges of said front and rear body panels, and wherein said absorbent composite is connected to said front and rear body panels.

Claim 43 (Cancelled).

44. (Currently Amended) A method of using an absorbent garment comprising:

providing an absorbent garment comprising a body panel having a line of weakness extending across at least a portion thereof; and  
applying a tear force to said body panel along said line of weakness, wherein said tear force is less than about 5 lbf, and thereby breaking said body panel along said line of weakness;

wherein said body panel comprises a front body panel extending continuously between and defining opposite, laterally spaced side edges joined to opposite, laterally spaced side edges of a rear body panel at a pair of side seams ~~seam~~, wherein said line of weakness is formed in said front body panel between said side edges of said front body panel, and wherein said front body panel has a first terminal crotch edge formed at least at a midpoint between said side edges of said front body panel and said rear body panel has a second terminal crotch edge formed at least at a midpoint between said side edges of said rear body panel, wherein said first and second terminal crotch edges are longitudinally spaced apart and define a longitudinally extending gap therebetween at said midpoints between said side edges of said front and rear body panels, and further comprising an absorbent composite bridging said longitudinally extending gap at said midpoints between said side edges of said front and rear body panels and overlying said midpoints between said side

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edges of said front and rear body panels, and wherein said absorbent composite is  
connected to said front and rear body panels.

45. (New) The absorbent garment of claim 14 wherein said body panel has a tensile strength of less than about 5 lbf across said line of weakness.

46. (New) The method of claim 40 wherein tensile force is less than about 5 lbf.

47. (New) The absorbent garment of claim 42 wherein said crotch member comprises opposite, longitudinally spaced first and second terminal edges and said front and rear body panels comprise first and second terminal waist edges respectively, wherein said first and second terminal edges of said crotch member are longitudinally spaced from said first and second terminal waist edges of said front and rear body panels respectively.

48. (New) The absorbent garment of claim 44 wherein said crotch member comprises opposite, longitudinally spaced first and second terminal edges and said front and rear body panels comprise first and second terminal waist edges respectively, wherein said first and second terminal edges of said crotch member are longitudinally spaced from said first and second terminal waist edges of said front and rear body panels respectively.